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Source: *World Politics*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (Apr., 1949), pp. 277-307

Published by: [Cambridge University Press](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2009031>

Accessed: 11/01/2015 15:58

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# CHOICE IN CHINA

By NATHAN LEITES and DAVID NELSON ROWE

IN Europe the zones of Soviet and non-Soviet dominant influence have, for the time being, been stabilized. Moves and counter moves have become tactical. Despite recurrent impressions to the contrary—which may, in part, be intended by our opponent—there is in Europe hardly an immediate crisis requiring *immediate* counteraction. Such a crisis, and such a requirement, exist, however, in Eastern Asia; and our successes in stopping the Soviet advance in Western Europe will prove illusory if we fail to contain it in the Far East.<sup>1</sup>

It is conceivable that failure in the Far East will have no serious consequences for our future world position. The power potential of Eastern Asia may remain unmobilized for the next generation. On the other hand, Asiatic Communist Parties may attain substantial success in tasks hitherto unsolved. That Japan's recent attempt to "organize" Eastern Asia miscarried should not lead us to assume that future attempts will use similar techniques or meet with similar failure. The same holds true for the earlier and abortive efforts of the Chinese Nationalist Party. Clearly, it is impossible to predict with any certainty how powerful Soviet China would be, say, in 1975.

On the other hand, to allow developments to continue their present course appears to involve great risk. It would seem more dangerous to take no action, on the assumption that Communist efforts sharply to raise the power of China and of the rest of Asia will fail, than to take measures which will guarantee moderate safety for the future. The danger of doing more than may ultimately prove to have been necessary seems smaller than that

<sup>1</sup> The "frontal" attack in Europe came to an end in the middle of 1948 with the stabilization of the airlift to Berlin and of the Yugoslav Politburo in Belgrade. The campaigns of Tulpanov and Zhdanov failed. But they served the purpose, whether so intended or not, of being feints in connection with the Asiatic "rear" attack which gathered force in the fall of 1948 and achieved major victories around the turn of the year.

For the background of our recent policy in the Far East, see David Nelson Rowe, "American Policy Toward China," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 255, January, 1948, pp. 136-145.

of failing to prevent a sharp deterioration of our future position. Available knowledge of future developments is, in most spheres of policy-making, not complete enough to make it possible to avoid all waste. Our knowledge may, however, already be sufficient to make it possible to avoid disasters, however remote. In this respect, we should probably be willing to imitate our Soviet competitors. They are accustomed to base their calculations upon the assumption that the worst future contingency is the one which their policy must plan to prevent. They believe that the less dangerous contingencies will then take care of themselves. Failure to plan to prevent the worst contingency from occurring is, on the other hand, to invite it to happen.

This makes it necessary to sketch the outlines of current developments in Eastern Asia which may possibly prove disastrous if left unchecked. Similar probabilities were clearly faced by our policy-makers and the public only a few years ago when the Japanese seemed about to succeed in creating a Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere. The image of a future Greater East Asia mobilized against us was to a significant extent behind our vast counter-mobilization from 1941 on. Realization of these dangers had for several years placed us in such sharp opposition to Japan as to reduce Pearl Harbor to an almost symbolic occurrence. The Japanese decision to attack us directly came after the American decision to combine action with other powers to stop the Japanese advance on the Eastern Asiatic continent. When stringent economic sanctions were imposed on Japan, the Japanese government was left with the choice of desisting from the final steps in the construction of Greater East Asia or of opposing us by force. At this point the Japanese naval authorities and the government under their influence decided that, in order safely to go ahead in Asia, they would have to destroy the only American weapon which could be brought to bear against them in the western Pacific, the United States Navy. The Soviet Union and its allies do not at present, and in the immediate future presumably will not, possess facilities comparable to those of the Japanese for striking at us directly. Their continental policy, on the other hand, as will be argued below, is more dangerous to us than that of the Japanese. The first circumstance reduces the difficulty, and enhances the urgency, of opposing

Soviet policy; but it also obscures the necessity of opposing, while there is yet time, a threat greater than that posed by Japan.

In order to marshal the evidence to support the conclusions suggested above, and to clarify their policy implications, we shall discuss the following questions: What is the nature of the Chinese Communist Party? What are its probable objectives for China? What is the probable future power potential of a Soviet China, either by itself or in relation to other regions in Asia and the western Pacific? What is the probable future international alignment of a Soviet China? What will be the probable impact of this on the security of the United States? Do the dangers of current developments suggest new American policies? We submit that they do, and shall offer the outlines of a policy as a basis for further clarification and specification.

#### CHINESE COMMUNISM AND THE POLITBURO

On the occasion of his April, 1945, visit to the Kremlin, Ambassador Hurley asked Molotov about the attitude of the Soviet government towards the Chinese Communist Party. Molotov answered: "Chinese Communists? They are simple agrarian reformers!" At the Potsdam Conference, Stalin, according to James F. Byrnes, said that "the Chinese Communists were not real Communists at all."<sup>2</sup> One may recall that similar opinions were prominent in this country from the middle thirties until a recent time, and are by no means extinct today. As a matter of fact, "*the mystery is not, are they really Communists? It is only how the question can be raised by any informed and sincere person.*"<sup>3</sup>

For reasons which cannot be elaborated here, the Chinese Communist Party has achieved a maximum of deception with a minimum of surface adaptation. It never arranged for an apparent rupture with the Comintern, as did the American Communist Party in 1940. It never hid the sacred name "Communist Party," as did (and do) a number of Comintern sections in colonial and semi-colonial areas. The records of the Comin-

<sup>2</sup> David J. Dallin, *Soviet Russia and the Far East*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1948, p. 233; James F. Byrnes, *Speaking Frankly*, New York, Harper, 1947, p. 228.

<sup>3</sup> Subcommittee no. 5, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Communism in China*, Washington, U. S. Govt. Printing Office, 1948, p. 2. Italics are in the original text.

tern up to its "dissolution" in 1943 show regular and prominent participation by Chinese Communists in the organs of that body and its deliberations; the "Chinese question" occupied at times a crucial and always a significant position in its prolific output. There was never any special attempt to hide the fact that a high proportion of the leading cadres of the Chinese Communist Party spent many years in the centers of the Soviet Union for purposes of training or political hibernation.

The communications issued by the Chinese Communist Party itself bear precisely that relationship to Soviet policy and propaganda which we have for a long time been accustomed to expect from a section of the Stalintern. The Chinese Communists followed without hesitation or qualification the jerky and profound changes of line decreed by the Soviet Union and the Comintern. As instances, one may recall the sequels to the conclusion of the German-Soviet pact in August, 1939, and of the outbreak of the German-Soviet war in June, 1941. In each case, the immediate and profound changes in the propaganda position of the Soviet Union and the Comintern were instantly and totally taken up in Northwestern China. Further evidence is so voluminous and unambiguous that it seems permissible not to adduce it here, but rather to invite anyone who doubts the complete subordination of Communist China to Moscow to present counter-evidence.

A Communist Party outside Soviet Russia is expected to conform to the Moscow line not only in matters concerning other parts of the world, but also in affairs affecting it directly—and negatively. When the Soviet army occupied Manchuria in the summer of 1945, it proceeded to a wholesale removal of industrial equipment from this most industrialized area of China. Like all Communist Parties, the Chinese Party had been determined to push the industrialization of its territory, and had counted on the capture of the existing industrial base in Manchuria. When Soviet policy upset, for the moment, this major part of the Chinese Communist calculations, there was no public protest from the Chinese Party. According to the *Daily Worker* of July 26, 1946, Li Li-san, recently returned from the Soviet Union, said in Harbin: "I feel that the movement of the machinery is not an important problem at all. Of course the Soviet

Union moved some machinery, but not a large amount compared with its war losses.”<sup>4</sup>

The subordination to the Moscow center which is shown in such abnegation is equally mirrored in innumerable nuances of style and imagery. When, in the fall of 1945, the negotiations between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party broke down, Mao Tse-tung said that the Kuomintang “hoped that certain Allied officers will fill the same role that General Scobie, the British commander, filled in Greece.”<sup>5</sup> While this at first sight may seem to be a rather unimportant choice of comparison, an analysis of verbal patterns used by Communist Parties around the world at that very moment would show a considerable incidence of negative reference to British intervention in Greece. This random instance could be multiplied indefinitely.

During the period when it was widely accepted as probable, or at least conceivable, that the Chinese Communist Party was Communist only in name, observers repeatedly commented that they heard practically no Russian spoken during their sojourns in the centers of the Party. While the massive and overt presence of non-Chinese personnel would indeed have been good evidence of organizational dependence on the Soviet Union, their absence or invisibility can hardly be taken as evidence of autonomy. This matter should be viewed in the context of the complicated history of the organizational relations between the Soviet center and its outposts since 1920.

Until the late twenties, the Comintern held to the practice of dispatching to its sections as resident agents those whose political careers had been made elsewhere and whose task it was openly to foster the “bolshevization” of the particular Party on the spot. Little care was taken at the time to hide the existence and dominant influence of such emissaries over the affairs of a national party. The practice still exists, in fact, although much greater care is taken to make a person like Gerhard Eisler invisible. When Stalin prepared the political liquidation of the Trotsky-Zinoviev opposition at the Fifteenth Party Congress in December, 1927, he wanted to show the Congress an upsurge of the “Chinese revolution” which had suffered such a severe

<sup>4</sup> Quoted by David J. Dallin, *op. cit.*, p. 245.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 341.

setback earlier in the year. Hence, the Comintern emissaries Heinz Neumann and Lominadze were instructed to arrange for an armed uprising in one of the remaining centers of Chinese Communist strength, Canton. This revolt, disastrous as it proved to be to the short-run interest of the local Communists, illustrates how open was their subservience to the dictates of Moscow.

After a transitional period in the early thirties the Comintern evolved, and formulated at its Seventh World Congress in 1935, somewhat changed practices and greatly changed symbols concerning the relationships between the center and the sections. By then a large part of the former leadership of the Comintern had been "politically liquidated." There were a few exceptions, as in the case of the British Party which in this respect adhered to the English tradition of continuity. But the center believed—and continued to believe until it was confronted in the spring of 1948 with the shocking behavior of the Yugoslav Politburo—that the surviving and new local leaders would be able to carry on with somewhat less direct supervision and still be ready to conform at any moment to the absolute obedience standards which had by then been evolved. Thus, figures like Maurice Thorez and Palmiro Togliatti were probably given a somewhat less controlled pro-consular status—although we cannot entirely exclude the hypothesis that the now invisible agent of the center (by now usually an MVD agent) remained almost as powerful as ever. The Chinese counterpart to these developments was, of course, the rise of Mao Tse-tung. The emergence of little national Stalins coincided with the greater use of nationalist symbols which the Comintern now initiated, or resumed. In the case of the Chinese Party, this combination of symbol and practice changes was, as we mentioned above, fairly successful in achieving the desired deception.

In the summer of 1945, the Soviet military and civilian apparatus entered the Manchurian region, towards which the center of the Chinese Communist Party had at the same time been moved. Simultaneously, former Chinese Communist leaders who had been hibernating in the Soviet Union were reintegrated into the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. Li Li-san had been associated with the earlier attempt to seize power via



the metropolitan (and certain rural) areas near the eastern seaboard, and had gone to the Soviet Union after the catastrophic failure of this attempt. Now he returned to the Chinese Communist center in Harbin. It is reasonable to assume that the spatial and personnel shifts mentioned—as well as the sharply increasing importance of the Chinese Communist Party and the danger of “Titoism”—have at present led to a reversion (supposing there had been a major departure) to the pattern of very direct control by the center.

The belief that the Chinese Communist Party is really a Jeffersonian Democracy was fostered by the fact that the Party for more than ten years operated in an agrarian area. But this, again, must be viewed in the context of the variegated history of its “mass bases.” Following the conception of a Bolshevik Party, which was most clearly presented by Lenin in 1902, the Chinese Communist Party has always sought out that mass basis—or that amalgam of mass bases—which seemed most useful for the unvarying goal of the seizure of power. Chinese Communists seem never to have fallen into the deadly sin of regarding themselves as irrevocably tied to any given social stratum. When Kuomintang repression depleted the ranks of professional revolutionaries and separated them from their largely urban mass connections in the eastern seaboard area, the survivors showed this characteristic of a Bolshevik Party in spectacular fashion by their successive migrations to socially and spatially distant bases. While their choice was largely determined by military exigencies—which placed their bases first in central China and then in the northwest—the Party, once installed in any given habitat, proceeded, of course, to “utilize” its environment and to stress to the outer world the (alleged or real) adoption of certain “progressive” practices. Thus, the mirage of the Communists as “agrarian reformers” emerged and spread. Needless to say, the Party has always looked forward to exchanging the “backward” mass basis forced upon it by earlier Kuomintang successes for more congenial metropolitan milieus—a desire which is now being fulfilled.

It may be that the socio-economic practices of the Chinese Communist Party in the areas under its control coincided more nearly with the interests of the lower strata of Chinese society



than the practices of the Kuomintang; or that they have at least appeared to do so. Possibly this difference has been of importance in contributing to the successes of the Party in its war with the Kuomintang. Totalitarian regimes of the Bolshevik variety seem at various periods of their existence to confer major benefits on "the masses," and sometimes do confer certain advantages on them. On the other hand, it is important—and should by now be trite—to distinguish this matter from the question of democracy in the western definition of the term. Just as it seemed unnecessary at a previous point in this discussion to give in detail the copious and obvious evidence for the ideological connection between the Chinese Communist Party and the Soviet Union, so it seems unnecessary to show in detail the totalitarian character of the regime in the areas controlled by the Communist Party since the early thirties. As the Chinese Communist Party was the first Communist Party since 1919 to wield power for any length of time over any amount of space outside the Soviet Union, it was the first to apply the camouflage devices which have since been made better known by the Peoples' Democracies in eastern Europe. Observers insufficiently acquainted with Bolshevik practices were often puzzled, and frequently impressed, by the self-denial with which the Chinese Communist Party restricted its representation in the "legislative" bodies in its areas to one-third, leaving an overwhelming two-thirds to the "representatives" of other "parties." In the meantime, enough has been learned about the nature and function of, for example, "Socialist" and "Peasant" Parties in eastern Europe in 1947 and 1948 to make an interpretation of this practice unnecessary.

The Communist character of the Chinese Party has also been doubted because it admitted—with varying emphases at varying times—the "backwardness" of the "stage of development" reached by Chinese society in relationship to the proximate goal of "Socialism," not to speak of the ultimate goal of "Communism." This, however, must be viewed again in the context of certain not too well-known—although quite public—views of Leninism-Stalinism. The first revolutionary crisis with which Lenin was confronted in his political career was that of Russia in 1905. Both Lenin and other Russian Marxists asserted that

the next stage in the development of Russian society was a "bourgeois revolution." The non-Bolshevik Russian Social Democrats (with the exception of Trotsky, whose peculiar position we do not need to take account of here) believed, in traditional fashion, that that revolution would, and should, be executed by the "bourgeoisie." Lenin disagreed and developed the novel point—which has ever since been a dogma—that in the twentieth century a bourgeoisie tends to be unable to complete a bourgeois revolution, or even to initiate it. That task must therefore fall upon the "proletariat"—in other words, the Communist Party—which should assume the leadership over certain strata intermediate between it and the bourgeoisie, and usually designated as "petty bourgeois." This complex of beliefs was condensed by Lenin into the slogan of the "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" as a goal for Russia in 1905. The real point, which has been abiding and decisive for Communist Parties in colonial and semi-colonial areas (China, in Communist terminology, belongs to the latter group), is this: every Communist Party should always strive (avoiding "adventurism," to be sure) for the immediate seizure of power, regardless of the stage of socio-economic development of the society in which it is operating.<sup>6</sup> The character of that stage should determine what a victorious Communist Party does with the power thus gained, but should not inhibit it in gaining power.

### THE MOBILIZATION OF SOVIET CHINA

Specialists agree that the only area in Eastern Asia where the development of heavy industry on a large scale is feasible is southern Manchuria and the northern and northwestern sections of the north China plain.<sup>7</sup> Concentrations of iron and of coal suited for metallurgical uses are close to each other in this region. Sources of power, food, and such auxiliary materials as light metals are in the immediate neighborhood. The region has the best railway system of Greater China and has at least four sites at which important ports are located or possible.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Mao Tse-tung, "China's New Democracy," in *Communism in China*, *loc. cit.*, pp. 67-91.

<sup>7</sup> For a detailed discussion of China's resources for military power, cf., David Nelson Rowe, *China among the Powers*, New York, Harcourt Brace, 1945, Chaps. III-V.

That a massive development of heavy industry in this area may be "uneconomic" will be irrelevant for a victorious Communist Party. While Chinese natural conditions are considerably less favorable for industrialization than those of North America or the Soviet Union, they would permit massive industrial expansion (at great cost, to be sure—but this is not decisive here) *if* the traditional organizational barriers were to be reduced.

China today offers much greater industrial-military possibilities than did Japan when she began trying to lift herself by her own bootstraps. Japan's poverty in resources induced an expensive series of wars as an attempted remedy, and finally a disastrous effort to take over China as a resource base for military power. Japan's advantages in this process lay in the sphere of human organization. The disadvantages of contemporary China, with its much greater strength in raw materials, lie precisely in this sphere. But must we not assume that a Chinese Communist government—once the civil war ends—will make a concentrated attempt to reduce these disadvantages? And can we assume that this attempt will largely fail?

For reasons similar to those which impelled the Soviet ruling group, a Chinese Communist regime will probably attempt a forced tempo of industrialization.<sup>8</sup> (This is equally likely if one were to assume "Titoism.") The regime will be apt to believe that its internal stability depends on the construction of a sizeable industrial base, which will furnish it with a controllable working class and with the military means for frightening discontented elements into submission, apathy, or consent. In addition, the regime will be apt to believe—regardless of an ostensible atmosphere of friendliness in international affairs at any given moment—that it is potentially threatened by us; hence, that forced industrialization is an indispensable preventive device against being overwhelmed by us. Furthermore, the leading group of the Chinese Communist Party presumably shares the

<sup>8</sup> This need not exclude the economic integration of China and Eastern Siberia, particularly by placing Chinese unskilled manpower, certain tropical products, and ingress and egress by water at the disposal of the Siberian economy. The Soviet interest in Japanese prisoners, and the MVD empire in northeastern Asia are among the many indicators of Siberia's demand for manpower—which China will be in a position to satisfy.

general Communist belief that the maximization of its power is required for further progress in world expansion.

A rapid rate of industrialization will involve the procurement of a considerable food surplus for the expanded industrial sector of the economy. This will probably presuppose a good deal of collectivization.<sup>9</sup> Collectivization will, in its turn, further force up the rate of industrialization for at least two reasons: first, in order to produce the necessary agricultural equipment; secondly, in order to strengthen the more easily controlled industrial centers as human and material arsenals, to counterbalance agrarian disaffection resulting from collectivization in the countryside.

Thus, the mechanisms which led to the forced industrialization and collectivization tempos in the Soviet Union are likely to be operative in China too. In fact, in view of the greater difficulty of producing a food surplus for the cities, they are likely to operate in China in an even more ruthless fashion.

A Communist China, it is sometimes argued, would not be able to emulate to any substantial degree the rate of industrialization of the Soviet Union between the two wars because it would not be able to procure the capital goods and skills from abroad which were a necessary condition of the Soviet achievements. While one cannot deny such a possibility, there are other not improbable variants of the future to which we should like to direct attention.

First, what are the possibilities of what the Marxists call "primitive accumulation"—pulling oneself up by one's bootstraps—in a Chinese society driven by its Politburo? While they are surely not unlimited, they may well be substantial.

Second, what are the chances of the Soviet Politburo allocating critical amounts of capital goods and skills to a Communist China in the early stages of forced industrialization? There is no evidence that the Politburo is nationalist in the usual sense of the term and hence unwilling to "help foreigners" out of its own very scarce resources. There is much evidence that its members are empire-builders, whether utopian or disillusioned, who

<sup>9</sup> Agricultural collectivization is apt to begin in Manchuria, the area most suitable for large-scale mechanization, and most capable, in view of its population structure, of yielding regular and substantial agricultural surpluses.

are accustomed to disciplined economic calculations and quite likely to recognize the value, for the construction of a Eurasian empire, of diverting certain resources to Eastern Asia in the early stages of that area's industrialization.<sup>10</sup> However, the great difficulties which the Politburo might encounter as soon as it envisages the diversion of very scarce resources to the industrialization of China may well be one of the most severely limiting factors on this process.

Thirdly, what are the chances of obtaining certain amounts of Western capital goods and skills by making a temporary show of conciliatory behavior; by the exploitation of illusions concerning Titoism; and by the utilization of possible economic stresses in the West? The recent "You-can-do-business-with-the-Chinese-Communists" reactions of certain Western business groups show possibilities which would probably increase if a Communist Chinese government were set upon increasing them.

Specialists may differ about the degree of intractability of Chinese society when faced with the determination of the Chinese Politburo to achieve a high rate of industrialization. There are reasons to believe, however, that this intractability will affect the cost of forced industrialization more than its rate.<sup>11</sup> The Chinese Politburo will in all probability be set upon achieving certain rates of military-industrial development at whatever cost. On the whole, Soviet experience seems to show that this can be done—provided, of course, that one is not interested in a balanced development, but in the driving forward of certain sectors vital for military power; that one is willing to impose on "the masses" whatever sacrifice in terms of human misery and loss of life may be required.

<sup>10</sup> The massive 1945-46 removal of Manchurian industrial equipment to the Soviet Union was probably not so much motivated by a Soviet conception of Manchuria as a permanently "colonial" region ancillary to Eastern Siberia as by Soviet uncertainty about the postwar territorial status of the Chinese Communists. It seems likely that the Politburo envisaged in 1945-46 the possibility of an American-Kuomintang entry into Manchuria, and characteristically oriented preventive action on this most unfavorable variant of the image of the future. North Korea was not stripped.

The Politburo may come to consider the transfer of sectors of Eastern European industry to Eastern Asia, following its long-standing practice of compelling vast migrations of men and matériel in peace and war. The migrating installations might be less vulnerable militarily; the losses involved in migration might be compensated by the "trigger" impact on East-Asiatic industrialization.

<sup>11</sup> *Communism in China*, loc. cit., p. 49.

Such a policy would certainly impose tremendous suffering on the Chinese masses, but it might also bring certain advantages to them. For example, forced industrialization demands a large-scale decrease in administrative "corruption," an increase in educational levels, and development of the transportation system with incidental benefits to consumers. Even in the Soviet Union—which started from a higher level than China—these incidental advantages were important in contributing to the stability of the regime.

An additional factor—which may be particularly important in China in view of certain bureaucratic traditions—would be this: the regime will offer large opportunities for social ascent in a vastly expanded bureaucratic apparatus; and it is likely to use "popular" selection techniques in this respect, for reasons of expediency as well as of ideology, at least for a protracted initial period. This device tends to decapitate opposition by depriving it of potential leaders; to foster the belief in the "democratic" character of the regime despite its totalitarian features.

Those who are impressed with the difficulties facing any group striving for the rapid modernization of China would do well to recall the successes of the Japanese. Despite the fact that they were clearly foreigners, set on the exploitation of China for their own advantage, the Japanese, particularly in Manchuria, achieved considerable industrial results. The Communist Party with its native leadership will not labor under the handicap of being thought of as foreign. In addition, it will have available more effective techniques to prevent overt mass resistance and to force the execution of its successive Five Year Plans.

Since 1911, there has been no substantial period of internal and external peace in China and no government with the power to achieve the rapid modernization of China. Despite this, China's modernization during the early and middle thirties increased at a rate which Japanese strategists were inclined to consider a threat to the security of their own country. A Chinese Communist victory would bring about both conditions just mentioned and thus strongly increase the possibility of rapid industrialization.

The Chinese Politburo's use of the organizational techniques and physical weapons of the twentieth century, is apt to prevent



a repetition of those cases in Chinese history in which the Chinese are supposed to have “swallowed up” their alien conquerors. Even though traditional despotic regimes (the Mongols) and traditional authoritarian regimes (the Manchus) were unable, or would have been unable, to force the rate of social change, modern totalitarian regimes with up-to-date twentieth century methods—first and most fully developed by the Soviet teachers of the Chinese Politburo—may well be able to do so. As it has been stated:

Some of those who know most about the past of China are relatively innocent of knowledge of the techniques of tough modern politics. The modern police state can do many things in the realm of human control impossible for earlier tyrannies . . . Russia, as measured by performance in the second World War, had grown [since the first World War] in power relative to almost all others [i.e., other powers] . . . There is no good reason to assume that they [the Communists] could not do the same in China. To believe that they could not carry out a Communist program in China should be classed as one of the varieties of the “Madinot mind,” one of the products of faith in a line of defense based upon wishful thinking.<sup>12</sup>

What is more, the “swallowing up” of former invaders included the easy absorption into their service of great numbers of the trained government personnel of the previous regime. Thus, if the Mongols and the Manchus became Chinese, the Chinese bureaucracy allowed their domestication to take place under conditions which maximized the power of the “foreign” regime.

The prospect that a victorious Communist Party would avoid being swallowed up is even more favorable than these considerations suggest. Some of the major resistances, latent or manifest, of Chinese society against its Mongol and Manchu conquerors were either caused by their foreign origin or could more easily find expression because of it. In this respect the Chinese Communist Party makes the best of both worlds. It will be foreign in the sense that it will model its intensive drive towards the concentration of Chinese national energy on a spectacular foreign achievement—that of the Soviet Union, which to eastern Asia appears as the bearer not only of a recipe for social salvation, but also of advanced technique. With all this, the Party,

<sup>12</sup> *Communism in China*, loc. cit., pp. 51-52.



since the thirties, appears as Chinese in its leading personnel and in much of its public ideology. We may, of course, expect Moscow to do a great deal to prevent the infiltration of nationalism into the Chinese Politburo. But it seems reasonable to assume that the Soviet Politburo will be able to achieve this end without relinquishing one of its most important devices developed during the last fifteen years—that of nationalist mimicry which allows the agents of the Center to be accepted as indigenous everywhere.

Besides appearing to be Chinese, the Party presumably wears the aspect of a popular movement from below. There is an aura of the common man (*lao pai hsing*) around it; in contrast, the Kuomintang has increasingly appeared to be a set of cliques pursuing the interests of power-holders and of certain upper-class groups connected with them. The old-fashioned Kuomintang elite was not able to hide its face as well as the new Communist elite. This latter group has drawn upon the experience of one of the greatest camouflage successes in modern history, that of the Soviet elite.

One may expect in Soviet China something similar to a well-known sequence in Soviet history. In the initial phase of the regime, policies are adopted which procure a considerable amount of genuine mass support—the “nod head” phase. This phase is used for the construction and expansion of a totalitarian apparatus of overwhelming weight which subsequently—in the “shake head” and “chop head” phases—allows the regime to adopt policies which tend to reduce mass support severely. Under totalitarian conditions such a development is quite feasible on at least three grounds. First, the violence apparatus of the regime—made into a relatively independent sector of society—allows for the accumulation of considerable discontent which finds no way to make a dent in the regime without being annihilated in the attempt. Secondly, the might of a totalitarian apparatus creates the kind of fear which the subject tends to experience as apathy or as a special kind of loyalty. Thirdly, to come back to the “common man” facade of the regime, the totalitarian apparatus built up is, of course, one which does not rely only on violence but also on direct attitude manipulation. While the regime will move farther and farther away from its original

popular connections, it will not cease to stress these connections as being of its very essence. By presenting itself to the people as their own government, it contributes to the decapitation, in very early stages, of oppositional attempts.

Furthermore, the probable techniques of the Chinese Communist Party are likely to resemble certain traditional Chinese methods of imposing political unity on a vast and heterogeneous area. Unity of control has repeatedly been achieved in Chinese history by a single-minded group of military leaders showing little toleration of dissent. Such toleration (even the partial kind practiced by the Kuomintang) is apt to create the impression that the aspirant to power who exhibits it is weak and illegitimate—two concepts most closely interwoven in the Chinese tradition. In fact, the very existence of a serious rival or obstructionist to a claimant of central power tends to show the illegitimacy of his claim. Conversely, the full attainment of the goal tends not only to create the feeling of overwhelming power to which it is expedient to submit, but also provides legitimacy.<sup>18</sup>

It would thus seem unsafe to base American policy on the assumption that the military power of a Soviet China will remain roughly stationary, in absolute or relative terms, during the next generation. However, it might still be argued that a sharp increase of that power need not be taken as a threat to the United States.

### TITOISM IN SOVIET CHINA

Our present policy seems related not only to the belief that China will continue not to matter much, but also to the forecast of "Titoism" in China. There has always been a tendency to assume that Chinese Communists are different. Now that the earlier forms of this belief have declined, the same belief seems to reappear under the guise of predicting Titoism.

<sup>18</sup> A full conquest of China by the Communist Party is thus likely to have a profound impact on the loyalties of the vitally important Chinese communities in Southeastern Asia.

Those marginal regions of China in which much of the old Chinese political pattern survives are known to be among the "best governed" areas of non-Communist China. Oddly enough (from a Western point of view), these are the areas in which any government under Kuomintang auspices enjoys the greatest amount of mass support. Instances are Kwangsi, Chinghai and Ningsia. The fact that they are all "owned and operated" by Mohammedan leaders does not detract from the bearing of this on China at large.

The Tito affair is the one major failure—in the most important instance, it is true—in the longstanding Soviet policy of preventing elite sectors, at home or abroad, from becoming both dissident and powerful. There have of course been innumerable dissidents, but the Center always managed to deprive them of power by the time their dissidence declared itself; or to declare their dissidence after it had rendered them powerless. The latest instances are Gomulka in Poland, and probably Markos in Greece. The case of the Yugoslav Politburo was, no doubt, an organizational catastrophe for the Soviet Politburo.

Hence, we can be certain that it is a major objective of Moscow to prevent a recurrence of this in the most important area where it could happen—China. Soviet concentration of effort on this goal may possibly prove self-defeating. But it seems hazardous to base our policy on this assumption—if there is ground to believe that the prevention of Titoism in a Communist China will jeopardize our security in the middle and long run.

Furthermore, the Soviet Union, in regard to Titoism in China, will probably not face difficulties of the sort which have prevented it from liquidating Tito. Presumably the main deterring factor was not the heavy cost of Soviet military action against him, or of such action by satellites plus Stalinist Yugoslav groups. The decisive deterrent was probably the nearness of Yugoslavia to our containment fronts, which would mean that a direct attack would involve great dangers. The contrast between Tito and Gomulka is clear: Poland is within the safe interior of the Soviet sphere.

The position of a Soviet China vis-a-vis Moscow will be more like that of Poland than that of Yugoslavia. If any Titoist faction were to arise in a future Chinese Communist government, the Moscow Politburo would find it easy and safe to support the Stalinist against the Titoist faction, or to intervene directly. At that moment we would presumably have written off China, and it is unlikely that we would militantly intervene in favor of one or the other.

Soviet chances of preventing Tito-in-China are further increased by the crucial position of Manchuria-Northern China in the military potential of a future Soviet China. This area may

continue to be a Soviet-Chinese condominium—which would optimize the Soviet “veto position” in any factional struggle in the upper layers of the Chinese Party. Or, this area may be transferred, predominantly, to Chinese Communist control. Even in this case, its proximity to the center of Soviet military power in northeastern Asia would make it quite vulnerable to threats or actual violence. The prospects of a Chinese Tito serving American interests by declaring independence from Moscow are not great enough to justify basing United States policy on this contingency.

#### AMERICAN CHOICES IN CHINA

At this point it becomes relevant to ask: How will the policies available to us after the abandonment of China, and imposed upon us by that abandonment, tend to affect the alignment of Soviet China?

A major factor here will be the location of our future East Asian “Stettin-Berlin-Trieste line.” It is at present sometimes argued that the choice of such a definite line is expedient in Europe, but inexpedient in Eastern Asia. Our argument implies that we cannot avoid such a line; the only question is when to choose and where. Schematically, there seem to be three possibilities. Our containment policy may apply to the borders of Greater China and northern Korea; it may apply to the outlying islands—the East Indies, the Philippine Islands, Formosa, the Ryukyus, Japan; it may apply to Australia and the islands of the western Pacific now owned by us or held under mandate.

The first two choices would leave us with a “live frontier” with a Communist China. In both cases our policy would appear to the Chinese Politburo—or could be made to appear to the Chinese population—as being “imperialist” and “anti-Chinese.” It would be “imperialist” since it would support the positions of Britain, France, and Holland as well as the position of Japan. A policy of containment at this border would require the overt presence of American power in such proximity to China as to foster—if this were necessary—a “defensive” Soviet-Chinese alignment. In addition, such a containment policy would be “anti-Chinese” in view of the strategic position of Chinese minorities in this area, and in view of their probable alignment,

under duress if necessary (e.g., by the hostage system and by selective assassination), with the Communist government.

We could attempt to avoid these difficulties—we may even be tempted to do so—by retreating altogether from areas inhabited by large Asiatic populations; that is, to let containment begin with Australia and the small islands of the western Pacific. This would indeed reduce direct friction with a Soviet China—but at what cost to our position in the world balance of power?

We have attempted to establish that the substantial probabilities on which current American policy ought to be oriented are those of the rapid increase of the military potential in East Asia during the third quarter of the century, and of the alignment of this potential on the side of the Soviet Union. These developments—"colossal" or "grandiose," in totalitarian language—would of course in themselves greatly affect the American position in the world balance of power. This could be spelled out in detail with regard to the various kinds of weapons—material and non-material—employed in twentieth century warfare. We do not propose to do so at this point, but instead to direct attention to certain probable secondary—but major—effects of the developments we are assuming.

We distinguished above three possible containment borders in the Far East. Those who argue in favor of the abandonment of China, or entertain a moderate view of the loss which this would entail for our position, sometimes imply that our residual positions behind these containment borders would have about the same military worth which we attribute to them today. Presumably, however, the emergence and consolidation of a Soviet-aligned Communist China would reduce the military value of these positions to us. It seems on the whole evident that this would be the case if they came within close range of Soviet or Soviet-allied military power.

In addition, these less valuable positions would be increasingly costly to hold. Apart from the greater protection required by their more exposed position vis-a-vis a Communist China, non-military factors would work in the same direction. A low level of economic exchange between the Soviet and non-Soviet sectors of Eastern Asia would maintain and increase the sort of dependence on us now exemplified by the economy of Japan.

We would either have to subsidize an area like Japan sufficiently to make up for the economic opportunities we would be denying it, or use the threat and the actuality of military repression against increasing sectors of Japanese society. In general, the existence of a Soviet China—and of American policies attempting to contain it—will reinforce anti-American nationalist and Communist tendencies in the elites and masses of the rim areas.<sup>14</sup> Such internal disaffection will not only reduce the contribution of these areas to their own protection, but also make that protection (against internal as well as external dangers) yet more costly, and much more morally repulsive, particularly in view of the values attached to our anti-imperialist record in the areas involved.

One might well imagine a future situation in which American policy-makers will consider whether the declining security “output” from these positions is not falling below our rising economic and military “input” into them. If we then decide to withdraw from some or all of the Asiatic rim areas bordering on Greater China, we will greatly foster the rate of increase of Chinese military power. If the riches of the rim areas, in raw materials and in vast and skilled manpower, are joined to the resources of China, the conditions for rapid industrialization under Communist impetus will be unambiguously favorable. Many of the obstacles which it would be difficult to overcome if China alone were to proceed towards Five Year Plans would disappear if the regime were free to draw upon the resources base of a Communist Greater East Asia. The economies of Southeastern Asia and of North China-Manchuria would complement each other; they are easily connected by sea.

American policy is thus likely to be faced in some perhaps not too remote future with a distasteful choice of alternatives. Either we shall choose to continue indefinitely a military occupation of Asiatic areas, despite their reduced security value, a holding operation involving a very high and rising economic,

<sup>14</sup> In Burma, Indo-China, and Indonesia, Communists have, since the end of World War II, adopted a strategy and tactics similar to those which the Chinese Party adopted after its near-extirmination by the Kuomintang in 1927-28: the creation of highly mobile politico-military units as nuclei of a future state. In Japan, following the Bolshevik doctrine of utilizing all legal opportunities, the Communists are acting in part through the new democratic channels which the occupation has provided.



military, and moral cost;<sup>15</sup> or we shall, because of these costs, cease denying the economic use of these areas to a Soviet China and thus greatly enhance the rate of increase of its military power.

The abandonment of China is also likely to alter the "psychological peace-fare" positions of the two world blocs. At present, the prevailing conception is still that of a non-Soviet world with a Soviet sector. With the incorporation of much of Eastern Asia into the Soviet bloc, the previous "one-sixth of the world's surface" would have been transformed into one-third of the world's population. The scale of Soviet advance, and of Western retreat, would be likely to create the feeling that we are entering into a new, a Soviet world which *still* contains a non-Soviet sector.<sup>16</sup> Again, one could spell out in detail the probable direct and indirect impact of this not only on Western Europe, but on India and the other non-Soviet parts of Western Asia. We are dealing with possible chain reactions which a sober sense of reality makes unpalatable to many policy-makers and social scientists. But we should not exclude the probability of what seem at first sight to be political counterparts to "Buck Rogers" developments unless we have cogent reasons for doing so. It will be argued below that in view of the peculiar characteristics of Soviet foreign policy, the risks involved in our acting on a "Buck Rogers" assumption are moderate; while the risks involved in our not acting to prevent such developments are severe.

The point is not so much that developments in Eastern Asia, if unchecked, will "make war inevitable," if, indeed, war can

<sup>15</sup> The recent Delhi conference of 16 Asiatic nations on the Netherlands East Indies issue indicates the gravity of the conflict between ourselves and the Asiatic nations, with whom we want to be friends and allies, which such a policy is almost certain to involve. This conflict would extend to both Australia and the Middle East.

<sup>16</sup> Until a very recent date the Soviet directive has—wisely—been not to refer to these perspectives. But in his speeches at the Fifth Congress of the Bulgarian Communist Party in the second half of December, 1948, Dimitrov alluded to them; in his January 31, 1949, Moscow speech, the *Pravda* editor, Pospelov, did likewise—in the presence of the Politburo—and spoke about the twentieth century as that of the world triumph of Communism; and on December 5, 1948, J. Raymond Walsh said in New York: "In six to twelve months when Chiang Kai-shek is dead in his grave and the Kuomintang is scattered in the rubble of history and the Liberation forces have taken over in China and we must recognize them in the United Nations; and all the colonial areas of Asia have also been liberated, then, when the representative of the Soviet Union in the U.N. rises and says he speaks for more than half of mankind, we Americans will have to hang our heads in shame."



ever be thought of as "inevitable." The point is rather that our abandonment of Eastern Asia, or of the major part of it, the consequent rise in power of the Soviet bloc, is apt greatly to increase the cost to us of the peace—the cost in the widest sense of the word. That this will be so much more in the long run than in the middle run, and more in the middle than in the short run does not reduce the gravity of the matter. Such a rise in the cost of peace involves not only a considerable increase of the fraction of the national incomes of the non-Soviet world which will have to be spent on the sterile task of deterring the Politburo. It also implies a threat to our democratic values if our society is to be under the strain of a permanent alert which our abandonment of major portions of Asia will have made so much more arduous. If the Soviet bloc includes a third, or more, of the world's resource potential, the possibility of checking the further spread of Soviet influence while preserving a substantially non-totalitarian way of life would be greatly reduced.

A reversal of our current China policy seems therefore highly desirable; an enterprise which would warrant, in the short run, the expenditure of a not inconsiderable part of our national resources in order to avoid the unfolding of disastrous sequels in the long run.

The case for a reversal of our China policy, it has already been declared, is largely related to long-run considerations. This by no means implies that the timing of any changed policy, or the rapidity of its execution, has no short-run urgency. The contrary seems to be the case. Our knowledge of the structure of twentieth century history strongly suggests that certain sequences may take a long time to run to completion, but are practically irreversible from a very early moment on. Russian democrats failed to recognize, in the summer of 1917, the full import of the army fatigue, urban hunger, and peasant hunger for land. The results of this have not yet fully unfolded themselves in 1949; but the task of interfering with the sequence set up was infinitely more difficult—and proved unmanageable—after the summer of 1917. The spring of 1949 may well be comparable.

It is sometimes suggested that the sagacity of American

policy shows, or ought to show, itself in "waiting" for the "confused" Chinese events to "crystallize." If our argument is correct, that would be a policy of reducing ourselves to impotence.

However desirable, a reversal of policy might still be impossible to execute. In fact, opinions to this effect are not lacking; they caution against an attempt as wastefully futile as it would be exacting.

Just as certain current views of what the loss of China would mean to us seem over-optimistic, this seems unduly pessimistic.

Two questions arise: Are policies available to the American government which would enable us to stabilize and reverse events in China? If they are, can they become "practical politics" in the America of 1949?

At the time of writing (the middle of February 1949), the Communist conquest of China is still far from completion. There is still much room for maneuver in China, militarily and politically. The widespread Chinese desire for peace is not uncomplicated by considerations of price. If American policy were to arouse expectations of successful military resistance to the Communists, attitudes and behaviors on both sides would drastically change, no matter how long—within reason—the accomplishment of the new designs would require.

As of early 1949, the Communists probably do not expect in any case to be able to keep up their rate of advance of the last months of 1948. Suppose the new factor of an impressively conveyed, though not necessarily immediately and massively implemented, American determination to hold the present lines were to be added to this situation.<sup>17</sup> Given the cautiousness and flexibility of Leninist-Stalinist strategy, the Communist objective would be apt to shift jerkily: the consolidation of the great conquests of late 1948 would attain first priority rather than the pursuit of a further advance, which would suddenly appear as "adventurist." Communist strategy is acutely aware of the dangers of getting out on a limb and of provoking overwhelming counterattack; it has always resolved to protect itself against

<sup>17</sup> The course of events in Europe, after Congressional approval of the Marshall Plan, but before Marshall Plan goods began to arrive in any quantity, suggests that the mere announcement of a new policy may have profound immediate effects. In Europe, it made possible an immediate rallying of anti-Communist strength.

these dangers at the cost of missing what may superficially seem enticing opportunities.

Furthermore, Communist strategy is very sensitive not only to "the relationship of forces" actually present at any given moment, but equally, if not more so, to the probable development in the impending future. The Communist strategist, in political as well as military matters—a distinction of notoriously small importance for a Communist—is expected to hear the grass grow beneath the soil; it is the mark of "degeneration" to become aware of its shoots only when everybody else can see them too. If we can in the first half of 1949 impressively convey our determination to strengthen the foes of Communism in China by, say, late 1949, the time interval necessary for the actual implementation of our announced policy would probably not at all defeat its purpose. There is a strong likelihood, once our new determination were known, that any further Communist gains which it would appear feasible to snatch during that interval would be inhibited by the Party's awareness that they would be untenable once our policy reaches the stage of implementation. The Party—following a well-established Bolshevik pattern—would probably begin to regard a part of its unexpectedly huge recent gains as affording it comfortable retreat space should the necessity arise. The history of the Party has been marked by advance-and-retreat fluctuations of unusual amplitude. Its formative years in the later twenties have left it with a deep awareness of the catastrophes which may come from over-boldness. The caution which has arisen from such experiences would presumably be strongly supported by Stalin who was largely responsible for them. He may now be particularly unwilling to jeopardize the very creditable results already achieved, by rigid insistence on the immediate all-out conquest of China.

A detailed analysis of Soviet and Chinese Communist behavior since the end of the war would, we believe, show that it was rather consistently based on the expectation of a possible American turn to effective containment in China at any time. Once we have convinced Moscow and the Chinese Party—who are doubtlessly surprised and puzzled by what seems like a needless retreat contrary to the "interests" of the "American

ruling class"—that the turn has come, we may expect them to adjust rather serenely.

While the responsiveness of the Chinese Communist Party to our effective intervention is apt to be as high as it always, potentially, was, the responsiveness of the non-Communist Chinese authorities, regional and supra-regional, to shifts in American policy has greatly increased during the last few months. Two developments transformed the Chinese scene in late 1948: the rapid advance of the Communists, and the rapid shift of attitude and of influence within the top level of non-Communist Chinese authorities, greatly increasing the possibilities of *effective* Chinese-American cooperation. The Chinese Government has specifically requested increased American control over the war against the Chinese Communists. The hitherto prevailing relations between Chinese and American military and civilian agencies made for a low degree of utilization of American skill and material, but there is no need for those particular relations to survive. Past disappointments should, in the present critical situation, not stand in the way of insight into the fact that a new departure in Chinese-American *combined operations* has become feasible. Genuine agreement between American and Chinese authorities can now be reached on a new type of relationship which would sharply reduce the waste which prevailed in 1947-48. Thus, there is no reason at all to regard the shape of Sino-American relationships as fixed. A fresh and imaginative new pattern is needed, one which will satisfy the common and overwhelming interest in rescuing China from capture by the Communist Party. Many feats of American engineering have become possible because we have been unwilling to take for granted what appeared to be limiting factors. A less adventurous technology would have been unable to find a satisfactory solution to pressing problems. The same boldness in breaking precedents for the sake of major moral and security interests is required in the sphere of Chinese-American inter-agency relations. We can now rely upon the willingness of Chinese authorities to agree with us on techniques of combined work *which would leave success or failure largely up to us.*

The long-run success of any American action in the China of 1949 depends upon the effectiveness of its short-run military impact. The first aim must be a stabilization of the military situation which will provide time to build up strength for the later counterattack. With such a stabilization we shall gain the time for more roundabout methods of a socio-economic and political nature to create the conditions which will ultimately force a general Communist retreat.

This analysis has not sought to develop a detailed program of United States action to stiffen the opposition to Chinese Communism. Such a program can, in the authors' opinion, be formulated and enforced. It can only be elaborated on the basis of classified data and detailed knowledge available to policy-making officials. What we have sought to demonstrate is the need for some kind of vigorous short-run policy. Whatever form it takes, it would have to meet the following conditions:

(1) American determination of the kinds and amounts of weapons and equipment to be supplied to Chinese forces, with emphasis on types appropriate to the Chinese geography and technology;<sup>18</sup>

(2) Enough American personnel to permit Chinese-American liaison at both strategical and tactical levels;

(3) Over-all military direction by a prominent American military personality with successful experience in China, whose appointment would be an earnest of the serious intentions of the United States; and

(4) A mature United States information program in China, coordinated with the other aspects of our policy.

The nature of warfare in China is such that all that is required can be achieved—with a probability amounting to practical certainty—without throwing in resources on what *to us* would be a large scale. For the time being, then, we submit, a commitment of something between one-half of one per cent and one per cent, roughly speaking, of the American national income is likely to spell a huge difference to our future national security position. Our total military plus ECA plus China bud-

<sup>18</sup> The military supplies most needed in China are small arms, light artillery, light transport equipment, ammunition, fuel—rather than, say, jet planes whose distinctive capabilities would seem superfluous in view of the nature of the Communist opposition.

get would remain far below the fraction of our national income devoted to military expenditures during the late war. Our assumption, however, is that our national security is—for the long run, but therefore not less importantly—as much threatened today as it was during any phase of the recent war. This order of magnitude of expenditure in China would not be such as to interfere in any major way with present plans for domestic rearmament and European recovery.

We should from the start vigorously present to the Chinese people, to our own public, and to the rest of the world the full moral case for our actions. President Truman's inaugural address of January 20, 1949, expressed those ethical and political concepts from which the necessity to save China from Stalinist totalitarianism derives. Political warfare must be an integral part of our action. Our struggle, of course, is not against any section of the Chinese people, but against a small group of aspirants to despotism who "use" the symbols of democracy. The policy here proposed is merely the implementation—under disastrous conditions—of the traditional American goal of democracy, independence, and welfare for China.<sup>19</sup>

### SOVIET-AMERICAN WAR?

Is the Soviet reaction to an American policy of this type likely to bring about general war?

This would seem to us an extremely unlikely outcome. But even if the Soviets did so react, this might not be a valid objection to the policy proposed, for the following reasons.

The prediction that the Politburo will, in effect, regard a reversal of our China policy as a *casus belli*, must be based on one of two assumptions. First, the Politburo may choose China as the appropriate ground upon which to have a showdown which it has decided to be desirable or unavoidable by virtue of its global analysis of the situation (we must assume that most major analyses underlying Politburo behavior are global).

<sup>19</sup> In this article we abstain from discussing the problems of democracy in China. We do of course regard the democratization of China as a major and attainable goal for the latter half of the twentieth century—provided China escapes the 1949 danger of absorption by totalitarianism, a process notoriously difficult to reverse. *Even in the context of this urgent task certain immediate measures of democratization may be indispensable.* Discussion of this major point lies beyond the confines of this article. For an analysis of basic factors see David Nelson Rowe, *op. cit.*, Chap. VIII.



If this were so, we must also assume that the Politburo will not lack other contact areas within which to begin a general conflict for which they feel the time now to be optimal. We could therefore not escape this crisis by abandoning China.

The other possibility is one particularly relevant in the context of our analysis: the Politburo may have revised its presumable 1945 estimate according to which the incorporation of China into the coming Soviet world empire was to come later. It may feel in 1949 that this incorporation must come now in order to allow for the proper development of history during the rest of the century. Therefore, an effective American intervention may have to be prevented even at the cost of war. While, again, this seems unlikely to us, it should be noticed that this assumption is hardly an argument for the policy of abandoning China. The assumption, in fact, implies that the Politburo agrees with the substance of this paper with respect to the role of China in the next phase of history. If the Politburo were to infer from this that it cannot afford to miss the conquest of China at this late stage of its accomplishment, we would certainly have to infer from the facts—and doubly from such a Soviet interpretation of the facts—that we cannot afford to allow the incorporation of China into the Soviet empire.

It might be said that the Politburo may overestimate the importance of China, and that we should not let ourselves be induced to join in such an overestimation. An overestimation of China by the Politburo, however, would be likely to fall into that class of false forecasts which become more or less correct by virtue of their being made the basis of major actions. If the Politburo “overestimates” China, it is, for example, likely that it will envisage the allocation of substantial amounts of capital goods from, say, the third Soviet post-World War II Five Year Plan to, say, the first Chinese Five Year Plan in the middle fifties—with all the consequences this would entail, as discussed above.

However, the two major assumptions listed above are unrealistic, and we have discussed them merely because an undue apprehension of immediate war sometimes seems to play an inhibiting role in the formulation of American policy. Most



available evidence seems to suggest that the Politburo would not regard a setback in China as a sufficient cause for reversing its over-all policy, whose supreme (though, of course, not exhibited) postulate seems to be to avoid a general conflict now, even at considerable price.

The Far Eastern policy of the Politburo since the end of the war makes it likely that it did not in 1945 and does not in 1949 regard the expansion of the Communist area in China beyond that attained in the second half of 1945 being of such vital necessity for the survival of the Soviet Union at this moment that it would be prepared to fight for it. (It is our belief—which we cannot elaborate here—that the Politburo would accept war *now* only for survival.) The lack of massive direct military support to the Communists outside of Manchuria makes it almost certain—despite its secondary deception intent—that the Soviet line was and is to have the Chinese Party attempt to push ahead as far as possible—hoping, of course, that its expansion by its own strength will succeed, but also willing to have it cut its losses if American counteraction should make that necessary. There is evidence to suggest that the Politburo never expected—and still does not understand—the divergence between our adoption of an effective containment policy in Europe and the absence of such a policy in China.<sup>20</sup> They are apt to be neither surprised nor provoked by the beginning of containment in Asia. Almost every act of Soviet policy towards China during 1944-45 (as, for instance, the insistence upon closer integration of Mongolia into the Soviet Union) pointed to concern with a probable dominance of the Kuomintang within the traditional Chinese boundaries. Soviet policy in Manchuria in 1945 and 1946 seems, as we noted above, to have been based upon the anticipation of a Kuomintang-American entrance even into that vital Soviet border region.

Suppose, however, that the Politburo, while not envisaging going to war for China now, would want to test the “seriousness” of our policy reversal, and attempt to limit its effectiveness, by intervening in the Chinese war more directly. There

<sup>20</sup> Cf. the discussion of the Soviet decision to strip the factories of Manchuria, *supra*, p. 280, which would hardly have been taken if Russia had expected to retain full control there.

is some fear in this country that this might "automatically" set off the Third War, and hence that our policy reversal in China would mean "playing with fire." The Politburo is apt to be quite free of such apprehensions, as its behavior in Berlin and elsewhere has shown. Communist policy-makers are extremely disinclined ever to feel themselves "committed" to any course of action; extreme elasticity in deciding about the next moment on the basis of what one learns in any given moment is a major rule of theirs. Soviet policy does not recognize uncontrollable sequels of any given action, extreme as that action may be. Also, there is evidence<sup>21</sup> to show that the Politburo tends to imagine the operational rules of our policy as similar to its own, unless we furnish *too* impressive evidence to the contrary.

Let us make the *extremely unlikely* assumption that direct Soviet intervention in China in response to ours would involve not only the appearance of Soviet matériel at the front and of Soviet personnel behind it, but also the actual participation of Soviet military units in battle; that our intervention would involve the same; and that a direct clash would ensue. Then *the Politburo* will not at all be apt to feel that this "automatically" means a general conflict, nor will it assume that we will look at it that way. This is no mere conjecture—the record of the undeclared Japanese-Soviet war in Manchuria, 1938-39, with the two major battles of Changkufeng and Nomonhan, seems suggestive in this regard. So is the recent record of the near-battle of Berlin which, for good and predictable reasons, did not become a battle, despite the short distance between American transport planes and Soviet fighter planes which were buzzing them.

It is sometimes argued that the policy sketched in this paper may be required by the situation but that it would be unacceptable to the American public.

There is very little evidence that American public opinion would not accept rather far-reaching courses of action on one condition: that the indispensability of such action *now* be demonstrated to it by its democratically chosen leaders. There is probably a widespread feeling of how difficult it is for the

<sup>21</sup> This and other points on Politburo strategy and tactics draw on an overall study of Bolshevik behavior which is at present being prepared by one of the authors.

citizen who is not a specialist on a certain political problem to arrive at a reasoned set of opinions about it; hence sometimes a lack of definite initiatives from the public. But there also seems to be a deepening and already intense awareness of the fact that the vast dangers of the new era in world affairs may at any moment call for quite unusual action and that security interests must dominate.

There is a danger of a vicious circle between government and public opinion as to new departures in foreign affairs. The government may hesitate to initiate certain courses of action because it believes that public opinion will not stand for them. The public may underestimate the extent to which government policies are oriented on assumptions about public opinion. Hence, public opinion, in the absence of government initiative, may not be aroused on issues that are really pressing. This in its turn reinforces policy-makers in their belief that they would not be able to secure public acceptance of far-reaching courses of action.

In the immediate past the American public has conclusively shown its willingness and eagerness to examine on their merits even very bold policy initiatives proposed to it by its chosen leaders. Our European policy in 1948 has shown this. We have also taken bold action—with risks—where the odds seemed all against a successful outcome. Stripping our own arsenals in 1940 to send arms to England was such a case. Our Asiatic policy in 1949 is not burdened by national weaknesses of the 1940 type. It should show again the boldness of our 1940 reaction to calculated dangers.